

# Integrity Matters



providing information on regulatory matters to the general public and Ontario Racing Commission clients

Winter 2006

## NEW HOME FOR ORC HEAD OFFICE

In a move that will mean better service and convenience for licensees and stakeholders, the ORC is relocating to the west end of Toronto. The transition to the new facility will commence in early March 2006 and will be completed by the end of that month.

The new ORC Head Office will be located at 10 Carlton Court, Suite 400 Toronto, Ontario M9W 6L2 near the intersection of Dixon Road and 27 Highway, just east of Pearson International Airport.

With its lease at the downtown location due to expire, the ORC initiated a search to find new accommodation with increased floor space while reducing costs and making its Head Office location more convenient to stakeholders.



The new ORC home at 10 Carlton Court, Suite 400

Located within a hub of 5 major highways, licensees and industry officials should find the new premises easier to get to. As well, the location will work well for a large number of ORC staff that works in the field throughout the province. For essentially the same rent as the smaller space in downtown Toronto, the ORC has acquired a larger, more multi-use location. For example, in the new location there will be facility for in-house training and the Appeal Board Hearings and joint ORC/Industry working sessions.

New telephone

number as of

March 6, 2006

(416) 213-0520

Visit the ORC web site: [www.ontarioracingcommission.ca](http://www.ontarioracingcommission.ca)

**Ontario Racing Commission**

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**APPROVED RACE DATES**  
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**FEATURED SHOWCASE**  
Protection of the Horse  
The health and well-being of the horse is a paramount concern to the industry. Using one of the best horses in the world, the Ontario Racing Commission has used technology to enhance horse and rider safety and to ensure a high standard of horse care.

Are you looking to print out an up-to-date calendar of race dates? Want to know how to get licensed or find an ORC Licensing Office? How about getting instant access to Rules of Racing, forms and industry statistics?

Be sure to visit the Ontario Racing Commission's new web site! The site is a great resource providing the horse racing community with a valuable tool to support its industry.

The new site is divided into sections describing the Commission and its activities, as well as information about the industry in general.

### WHAT'S AVAILABLE:

- A "What's New" section
- "Opportunity for Input" section
- Access to core ORC documents
- How to appeal a decision
- Up-to-date Thoroughbred Officials List
- A Photo Gallery of Ontario racing
- An electronic Integrity Hotline

Wendy Hoozeven, Manager of Information Services, says enhancements are currently being considered. "We are looking into such things as a searchable rulings section and a hearings calendar, which will be developed as resources, demand and budget allow. We encourage everyone to visit the site and provide us with feedback."



Ontario  
Racing  
Commission

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## WE VALUE YOUR INPUT



Since the last issue of Integrity Matters, the Commission has been moving forward on a Strategic Plan for the years 2006 to 2009. The

2003 Plan was the foundation for our regulatory activity for the past three years. The intent of the new Strategic Plan is to build on the accomplishments of recent years and to address current issues in a manner that is practical and realistic.

The Strategic Plan process has provided an opportunity for the Commission to communicate directly with the industry through web based surveys, as well as public forums. We have held public forums on several occasions in the past, and the information and ideas that industry members provide us is always helpful. For instance at the race date hearings held in October 2004 and October 2005, industry representatives made presentations on important issues affecting the industry. (See the Public Forum story) In December 2005, two public forums were held as part of the Strategic Planning process - one in

Mississauga and the other in London. To make access to the process easy for industry participants from southwest Ontario, the London forum was held on a race night, when it was felt many would be close by.

The Strategic Plan sets out the vision and mission of the Ontario Racing Commission sets out the Commission's role as part of the industry. The Plan also sets out our priorities for action, so that the resources of the Commission are properly applied to those priorities. It is not a strategic plan for the industry as a whole.

Over the next year, there will also be other plans developed with respect to the Horse Improvement Program and with respect to the Quarter Horse slot revenue distribution, which will require extensive industry involvement and input. Each industry participant should know that his or her involvement in

the development of these plans is important and welcome. While the Commission has the responsibility to make the decisions, we make better decisions if industry participants take the time to share their ideas, opinions and experiences with us.

Finally, Larry Todd has completed his three year term as Vice Chair of the Commission in early October. He contributed to the work of the Commission with skill and humour. I have expressed to him my deep appreciation and thanks. His work on the Commission represents only one aspect of his longstanding commitment and contribution to the industry, and his deep passion for the sport.

Lynda Tanaka

## FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER



If there is one thing constant in life - and in particular the racing industry - it is that things never stay the same. Change is all around us, from shifting markets and trends, to increased competition from gaming, leisure and other sporting activities.

If we in the racing industry are to keep pace, as well as grow and expand our business, we must

continually look for ways to improve our product and be more innovative. Our biggest challenge is perhaps how the various racing groups and associations can find improved ways of working together. This is a personal commitment I have made since first arriving and having the honour of serving here.

As you note from our Chair's message, the Ontario Racing Commission, through its Strategic Planning efforts, is striving to address our industry's concerns. I am grateful to all those that completed the surveys and participated in the public forums. A report on our proposed activities and the financial directions for the next three years was to be presented to OHRA's February meeting. As always, we value your input.

Our move to new and larger premises certainly represents a significant change. I hope that during your first visit to the facility, you will find our new home accessible, responsive to your needs, and convenient. After so many years in our previous location, I recognize that for some, the move has been a

challenging transition. In particular, I want to thank ORC staff - the people that serve you - for their patience and understanding.

I hope that all readers will note with interest the articles featured in the Health of Your Horse pages: from a new program to assist our Official Vets, to guidelines on disease control, the information could have a significant impact on your horses and your operation. Please also refer to the sidebar on Medication Control. In keeping with our tradition of open communication, we will be sharing more information on this important subject with you over the next weeks and months.

So let us resolve to meet the challenge of maintaining a successful racing industry in Ontario. Let us be open to good communication and continued dialogue - especially new and innovative ways of working together.

John L. Blakney

PUBLIC FORUM  
"The future  
direction of the  
industry"

Steve Mitchell, Chief Financial Officer of Woodbine Entertainment Group, spoke about the future direction of the industry at the October 2005 Race Date Hearing. His message was that while the last few years have been a relatively prosperous time for the industry, things seem to be changing and that change would be accelerating. He applauded the level of co-operation between race tracks in Canada, in terms of working on issues that help the whole industry.

His view was that the revenue streams from pari-mutuel wagering and slots were not going to be holding firm in the long term. He reviewed the competitive environment including online poker, betting exchanges, and internet wagering, all of which offer opportunities to the betting public.

Mitchell also alerted the Commission to the need for the industry to work together to address the size of the horse improvement plan levy, the funding needs of the federal and provincial regulator, and the need for regulation to support a more competitive product.

**1-888-230-3505**

**Ontario Problem  
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Confidential, anonymous, free and open 24 hours.  
Call us if you are concerned about your own or  
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A program sponsored by the  
Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART) and  
funded by the Ontario Substance Abuse Bureau of the Ministry of Health

## VETERINARY NEWS

### NEW DRUG INFORMATION SHEETS NOW AVAILABLE

In early 2005, new rules were implemented by the ORC, requiring veterinarians to provide their clients with written information about the medication he or she is administering or prescribing to a horse. This information must include the detection level of the medication, its anticipated result, and any side effects that may occur with its use.

To assist veterinarians in meeting this requirement, the Ontario Association of Equine Practitioners (OAEP) undertook the task of creating the necessary information sheets for medications commonly used by equine practitioners in this province. Veterinarians who are OAEP members have access to this valuable information, which they can now provide to their clients as necessary.

### VET OBSERVATION PROGRAM

During the summer of 2005, the ORC implemented a new program to record and track the observations of Official Standardbred Veterinarians.

On any given race night, the Official Vet must make determinations with regard to whether a horse is fit to race. With 16 standardbred tracks across the province, horses travel from track to track quite regularly. Faced with new and unfamiliar horses, Official Vets were making race fit decisions without historical reference.

With the new system now in place, the Official Vets submit their observations to a confidential database managed by Standardbred Canada. This data is then made available to other Official Vets for any horse on any given night's program. (Please note: this is a confidential database available to Commission/Official Veterinarians only.) The program is valuable for recording past abnormalities of specific horses, which are not always caused by unsoundness. Using this historical information combined with their own findings, the Official Vet is able to make a more informed decision as to a horse's fitness to race.

The ORC is also now able to document and track certain conditions. For example, over the last year, a heart condition called atrial fibrillation has been diagnosed more frequently. Documenting these cases in the Vet Observation System is one step towards sorting out this disease.

The Veterinarians using the system are pleased with the new information the system now generates, providing them with a tool for achieving more consistent evaluations.

## 2005 Death Registry Report 40 FEWER CASES

Compared to 2004, there were 40 fewer deaths of racehorses reported to the Death Registry in 2005. A total of 153 deaths were reported in 2005 compared to 193 in 2004. The numbers from 2004 and 2003 included a number of racehorses that died due to barn fires, so it remains to be seen whether or not this decline is significant.

Of the 2005 total, 89 of the deaths were Standardbred and 64 were Thoroughbreds. This is a similar distribution to previous years. Cause of death is broken down as follows:

- Similar to 2004, the largest group of cases (77) consisted of horses that died as a result of breakdown injuries (e.g. fractures and severe tendon and ligament injuries). University of Guelph research being conducted on this type of breakdown has just been published. The initial findings were presented at the 2006 Ontario Veterinary Medical Association Conference in January.
- Colic remains a major cause of racehorse deaths, with 17 cases this year.
- A further research project is just starting up, which will study the 11 "sudden death" cases, where the death has occurred either in, or immediately after, a race.

The various other causes and their numbers are as follows:

12	Neurological diseases
13	Miscellaneous (e.g. heart problems, abscesses, etc.)
10	Drug reactions
7	Septic arthritis
4	Undiagnosed
2	Pneumonia

It is hoped that the overall reduction in cases is real and will result in a sustained trend. There is every reason to believe that ongoing research will lead to more preventative measures being put in place, such as track surface improvement and improved horse management practice, which will bring about safer racing and healthier horses.

## Suggestions from a practicing veterinarian

DAVID GRANT, DVM

The ORC invited Dr. David Grant to submit his suggestions for improving the care and treatment of racehorses, based on his years of experience as a practicing veterinarian.

Commission Veterinarian Dr. Bruce Duncan offers his comments. Dr. Duncan is also a member of the OHRA Biosecurity Committee. The committee is chaired by Dr. Bob Wright of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and includes representatives from thoroughbred and standardbred breed organizations, the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency and the Ontario Veterinary College.

What do you think of Dr. Grant's suggestions? Will owners agree to the release of medical records of a horse? Will the racing industry support the establishment of a "horse passport" and the inherent cost? What about the issue of mandatory vaccinations?

Send your comments to: [inquiry@ontarioracingcommission.ca](mailto:inquiry@ontarioracingcommission.ca)

**DR. GRANT:** "At Ontario race tracks... ORC licensed veterinarians perform all injections and nasogastric intubations, whereas at private facilities some of these procedures are routinely performed by the trainer. In my view, this may be a "gray" area especially where insurance companies are concerned. The trainer may be incurring unnecessary liability by agreeing to perform some of these procedures."

**DR. DUNCAN:** "This is true - reference the story 'You and the Rules' in Winter 2005 Integrity Matters. There is a risk trainers could be charged with cruelty to animals. The College of Veterinarians would also take issue with improper treatment, as it is responsible for protecting the public interest..."

**DR. GRANT:** "Sometimes it is difficult to properly treat a particular horse because both the veterinarian and trainer are unsure about the medical history. This is particularly true with the 'claiming horse'... One solution to this problem would be an official claiming horse medical record. The veterinarian would make entries into the record each time a treatment is performed.

This record would be given to the new trainer, in the event the horse is claimed.

This would almost certainly ensure a higher level of health care for the horse."

**DR. DUNCAN:** "The Biosecurity Committee has looked at this issue before. Fact is, for this to happen, the previous owner would have to agree to the release of the information. It is part of a confidential client relationship between the vet and the owner. The previous owner may not care or may not want the next owner to have the information.

"It would also require a microchip or at least a document (or passport) that travels with the horse. This is done in England, where a private company handles this function. The comparably small size of our industry and the lack of infrastructure would make it a very costly operation. The Committee was unsure the Ontario industry would consider paying for such a service."

**DR. GRANT:** "Another problem I've occasionally encountered with horses that are frequently claimed is a reluctance on the part of the owner or trainer to incur the cost of a vaccination or wormer. In these situations certain horses may escape vaccination altogether, which could be very problematic, especially in light of the recent events concerning Equine Herpes Virus outbreaks..."

"There are three distinct forms of EHV infections. The first and most common is acute respiratory disease, which is often characterized by coughing, fever, decrease in appetite and nasal discharge. The second and more rare is a neurological form of this disease, which is characterized by weakness, or paralysis of the hind limbs. The third syndrome of EHV is abortion in pregnant mares. Once it gains entry into the mare, the virus rapidly replicates within the fetus, killing it quickly and causing its expulsion..."

"The vaccination for EHV may decrease the severity of signs in the respiratory form but will not prevent the neurological form from occurring. Although individually vaccinated horses can still become severely affected and even die, it is important to understand that vaccinated horses are far less likely to shed the virus..."

I feel that there should be mandatory annual EHV vaccinations in order for horses to race in Ontario."

**DR. DUNCAN:** "The Biosecurity Committee has developed protocols for most of the common infectious diseases. One of things examined was the issue of mandatory vaccinations but we decided for the time being this was not a course to take. We took into account that some vets are concerned that too much vaccinating can have a negative impact on a horse's health. While more effective vaccines are being developed, there are also questions on the effectiveness of current vaccines.

"We should note that the newly appointed Chief Veterinarian of Ontario, Dr. Deborah Stark, is compiling recommendations on what powers and regulations are needed in this province - like the power to enforce quarantines and vaccinations."

## DISEASE CONTROL AT RACETRACKS

Bruce Duncan, DVM, Greg Taylor, DVM, ONTARIO RACING COMMISSION

Scott Weese, DVM, ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE

Bob Wright, DVM, ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** this story is based on an Information Sheet released by the Ontario Racing Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. For a complete text of the article, visit our web site: [www.ontarioracingcommission.ca](http://www.ontarioracingcommission.ca).

The following guidelines should be used to prevent diseases from affecting the operation of a racetrack or for control of an outbreak.

### DISEASES THAT MUST BE REPORTED TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Reportable diseases are those diseases that are of significant importance to human or animal health or to the Canadian economy. For horses these include, but are not limited to, African horse sickness, anthrax, equine infectious anemia, piroplasmiasis, rabies, Venezuelan equine encephalitis and vesicular stomatitis. Suspicion or findings of any of these diseases must be reported to a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) district veterinarian.

### DEALING WITH NON-REPORTABLE DISEASES

At the racetrack, non-reportable disease control is handled by the Ontario Racing Commission and track officials. Non-reportable diseases include those that are already endemic (present commonly in the horse population) in Canada, and include, but are not limited to, equine influenza, equine herpes and strangles. Currently, there is no provincial legislation that controls the movement of horses coming into or within Canada or Ontario when horses are infected with a non-reportable disease.

The ORC, acting under the powers assigned to it by the Racing Commission Act, 2000, can stipulate certain requirements for horses entering the grounds of a racetrack. Racetrack owners, under private land ownership, can also create rules that are more restrictive than provincial or federal authorities.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NON-REPORTABLE DISEASES ENTERING A RACETRACK

1. Postpone racing.
2. Refuse entry of animals entering from a known infected area (includes state, province, track or barn).
3. Examine and monitor the health status of all horses entering from an infected area.
4. Require proof of current vaccination for a particular disease.
5. Place all animals coming in from an infected area in a specified quarantine area.

### BIOSECURITY MEASURES

1. Racetracks should have a protocol and management plan in place for controlling wild birds, animals and insects at the facility.
2. Paddock and stalls should be sanitized between use.
3. A current vaccination status should be maintained for all pony horses used at Thoroughbred racetracks, including rabies, West Nile virus, tetanus, influenza, rhinopneumonitis and strangles.

### MANAGING A DISEASE OUTBREAK

1. Isolate all infected animals in a separate barn.
2. Notify the ORC veterinarian, the racetrack officials of the suspicion or confirmation of the disease diagnosis.
3. Prevent the disease from spreading by:
  - Limiting the access of people to infected areas and horses.
  - Ensuring that all personnel entering these areas change clothes (or coveralls) and boots, and use hand sanitizers.
  - Installing hand wash areas that are supplied with disinfectant soap and water, or with an alcohol-gel sanitizer.
  - Placing footbaths containing a disinfectant in areas where people exit from an infected area. The footbaths should be refreshed at least daily to maintain their effectiveness.

### SUMMARY

It is much easier to prevent an infected horse from entering a facility than it is to treat the problem afterwards. Early detection of a disease and the initiation of biosecurity measures will usually prevent its rapid spread throughout a group of horses.

## HOTLINE AVAILABLE TO REPORT ABUSE

Industry participants are encouraged to make the Commission aware of specific instances of neglect or abuse by using the ORC's

### INTEGRITY HOTLINE:

1-877-ONT-RACE (1-877-668-7223)

The Hotline does not require an individual to leave a name, nor will an individual be forced to testify.

## DRUG USE WARNING AQUEOUS TESTOSTERONE ADVISORY TO LICENSEES

In the past year, there have been five equine deaths following the intravenous injection of the substance AQUEOUS TESTOSTERONE. While no direct link between this substance and the deaths has been reached, and while these animals were also receiving other medications, the testosterone was a common thread among all five deaths. All five deaths occurred shortly after the injections, with lung pathology suggestive of a drug reaction.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT MEDICATION CONTROL GOOD FOR THE HORSE VITAL TO THE INDUSTRY

### Medication Control means...

- Only using medications or products that have a therapeutic value to the horse.
- Working under the fundamental belief that it is unethical to give non-therapeutic drugs to a horse at any time.
- Not using any medications or products prior to a race that mask an underlying health problem, cause a positive test, or undermine the testing process.
- Using medications or products that are properly labeled, and using caution if the label appears irregular in any way.
- Only using prescription medications or products that have been prescribed by a licensed veterinarian.
- Obtaining medications or products from a distributor or supplier licensed or authorized to sell these products.
- Seeking veterinary advice on the effects and side effects of all medications and products used on the horses in your care.

## Integrity Matters

A publication of the Ontario Racing Commission, the provincial agency which governs, directs and controls horse racing in any or all its forms in the Province of Ontario.

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